REMARKS

This application contains claims 1-12, 19-40, 42-60 and 62. Claims 13-18, 41, 61 and 63 were withdrawn following a restriction requirement. Claims 19, 20, 26, 28, 29, 42 and 62 are hereby amended, while claim 25 is canceled without prejudice. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8, 10-12, 19-40, 42-60 and 62 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over Burridge (U.S. Patent 6,430,567), while claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Burridge. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 1-12, 30-40 and 50-60. Applicant has amended claims 19, 42 and 62 to clarify the distinction of the present invention over the cited art.

Burridge describes a facility for making a user aware of other users that are currently viewing the same Web page. The user is registered in a registry that identifies the page that the user is currently viewing. The registry enables the user to access a collaboration interface to view a list of users that are currently viewing the same page as the user. A request by the user to change Web pages updates the registry to reflect the new page (abstract).

Tools of the sort described by Burridge are acknowledged as prior art by the present patent application. The Background of the Invention (page 1, lines 22-29) refers to the concepts of "people awareness" and "document awareness": People awareness informs the user as to which other users are on-line at the same time as he or she is. Document awareness informs the user as to which other users are viewing the same on-line document or, more generally, are visiting the same "virtual place." The object in both cases is typically to enable a chat connection (or other collaboration) to be established between the users. The facility provided

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by Burridge falls in the category of document awareness tools.

The present patent application notes (page 3, lines 2-14) that programs known in the art for people and document awareness, such as that described by Burridge, are limited in that they enable network users to discover one another and interact only after they have reached a certain Web page. The users are thus limited to interacting with other users who happen to be on the same page or who have agreed beforehand to meet on that page. To overcome these limitations of the prior art (including Burridge), the present invention defines methods for providing a map that enables users to communicate with other users who are visiting other Web pages in a certain group of pages without visiting those pages themselves, as well as to determine in advance which Web pages they would like to visit, based on a knowledge of who else is visiting those pages at any given time (a sort of "social navigation"). Such a method is recited by claim 1 in the present patent application. An exemplary map of this sort is shown in Fig. 3. Such maps also enable operators of network servers, such as a Web server that supports a Web site, to be able to know at any given time the numbers and identities of users accessing different server resources, such as Web pages on the site (page 3, lines 14-18).

Applicant has reviewed Burridge with great care, including all the passages cited by the Examiner in rejecting claim 1. Burridge is concerned exclusively with enabling users to view and use lists of other users who are viewing the same Web page, not other pages. (See col. 7, lines 27-28; col. 8, lines 35-37; and col. 9, lines 14-16 and 41-42, for example, as cited by the Examiner against claim 1.) Although the information that Burridge stores may be updated when a user requests a new Web page (col. 10, lines 1-9), Burridge neither teaches

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nor suggests creating any sort of map. The Examiner identifies Burridge's Web pages as "resources" in the sense in which this term is used in claim 1, but does not specifically identify any element in Burridge that can be considered a "map." In the absence of such identification, applicant respectfully submits that Burridge cannot be taken to anticipate claim 1, nor to render the claim obvious.

Thus, claim 1 is believed to be patentable over Burridge. In view of the patentability of claim 1, claims 2-11, which depend from claim 1, are believed to be patentable, as well. Furthermore, applicant submits that the dependent claims recite independently-patentable subject matter. In the interest of brevity, applicant will not argue the patentability of the dependent claims. By way of example, however, claim 2 recites generating a graph having nodes corresponding to resources (such as Web pages) and edges corresponding to links between the resources. Burridge makes no mention of a graph of any sort, let alone the use of such a graph for tracking user access to the resources. Similar arguments may be made with respect to the other dependent claims.

With respect to the rejection of claim 9 for obviousness, the inventors in the present patent application, who are well-versed in the art, are unaware of any prior use of a fill level in a container to show the number of users accessing a resource, as required by this claim, despite official notice having been taken of this point by the Examiner. This feature of the present invention is exemplified by gauges 54 and 94, in Figs. 3 and 6 of the present patent application. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner bring some documentary evidence to support his contention that the use of a container fill level for the purpose recited in claim 9 was well known in the art prior to filing of the

present patent application, or else withdraw this rejection.

Claim 30 is an independent claim covering a terminal for managing a group of resources, including a display, which displays a map of the resources, and a processor, which tracks access of the resources by computer users and registers with the map the identification of the users and the resources they are accessing. As argued above with reference to claim 1, Burridge neither teaches nor suggests the use of a map. Therefore, applicant respectfully submits that claim 30 is patentable over Burridge, as are claims 31-40, which depend from claim 30.

Claim 60 is an independent claim covering a computer software product for monitoring activity on a computer network, which causes a computer to display a map of a group of resources and register the identification of users accessing the resources with the map. Claim 60 is therefore believed to be patentable over Burridge for the reasons argued above with reference to claims 1 and 30.

Claim 19 is an independent claim reciting a method for interactive access to a group of resources, in which a user accessing a first resource receives information regarding another user who is accessing a second resource. The sole reason given by the Examiner for rejecting this claim was that it is "similar in scope" to claims 1-8 and 10-12. It is difficult to answer such a rejection, which gives no specific correspondence between the elements of the claim and the cited art. Nevertheless, applicant has amended claim 19 to sharpen the distinction of the present invention over Burridge, by reciting that the user accessing the first resource in a receives a list of users <u>accessing a second resource in the group</u>. The user may then select another user from the list and may communicate with the selected user.

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This added limitation was formerly recited in claim 25, now canceled.

Although Burridge is capable of generating and transmitting a list of collaboration users to a client, this list contains only users who are <u>currently viewing the same Web page as the client</u> (col. 9, lines 14-18). <u>Burridge neither teaches nor suggests that a client viewing one Web page be presented with a list of users viewing a different, second Web page in a group of Web pages</u>, and gives no indication that his server might be capable of such a function. The only function that Burridge even mentions as extending over multiple Web pages is in connection with allowing one user to "follow or chase" another user from page to page (col. 10, lines 13-21). Even in this case, however, the client must select the user to chase from the list of users currently viewing the same Web page as the client (col. 10, line 14). The client then follows only this specific user, based on Web pages identified by the specific user in the user's browser window input field (col. 10, line 17).

Therefore, applicant respectfully submits that claim 19 as amended is patentable over Burridge. Claims 20-24 and 26-29 depend from claim 19. Claims 20, 26, 28 and 29 have been amended for proper antecedence in accordance with the amendment to claim 19. In view of the patentability of claim 19, claims 20-24 and 26-29, as amended, are thus believed to be patentable, as well.

Claim 42 is an independent claim covering apparatus for providing interactive access by a first user to a group of resources via a computer network. The apparatus implements a method similar to that recited in claim 19, and claim 42 has been amended in like manner to the amendment of claim 19. Therefore, for the reasons argued above with reference to claim 19, applicant respectfully submits that claim 42, as amended, is patentable over

Burridge, as are claims 43-49, which depend from claim 42.

Claim 62 is an independent claim covering a computer software product for interactive access to a group of resources via a computer network. This product operates on similar principles to the method of claim 19, and claim 62 has been amended in like manner to the amendment of claims 19 and 42. Claim 62 is therefore believed to be patentable over Burridge for the reasons argued above with reference to claims 19 and 42.

Claim 50 was also rejected solely on the grounds of being "similar in scope" to claims 1-8 and 10-12. As noted above, applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claim 50 recites a method for tracking visitors to a group of "virtual places" based on generating event indications in response to access by the visitors to a first virtual place, and then conveying the event indications to a client for the information of a user who is <u>not</u> visiting the first virtual place. Applicant has carefully studied the entire disclosure and claims of Burridge and has found no mention of event indications, nor of any equivalent term. Furthermore, as noted above, Burridge is concerned only with providing information to users who are visiting <u>the same Web page</u> and conveys no information whatsoever to users visiting other Web pages. Thus, Burridge neither teaches nor suggests the method of claim 50.

Applicant therefore believes that claim 50 is patentable over Burridge. In view of the patentability of claim 50, claims 51-56, which depend from claim 50, are believed to be patentable, as well. (Note also that Burridge makes no suggestion of initiating an observer process, as recited by claim 51.)

Claim 57 is an independent claim covering a synchronous server, which performs a function similar to the method recited in claim 50. Therefore, in view of
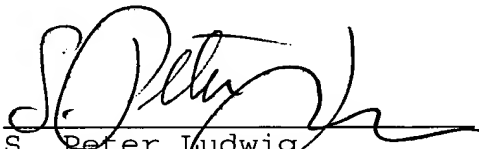
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the arguments stated above, claim 57 is also believed to be patentable over Burridge, as are claims 58 and 59, which depend from claim 57.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned withdrawal of claim 63, applicant notes that this claim, which recites a computer software product, is similar in substance to claims 50 and 57. Therefore, applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider the restriction requirement that was made with respect to this claim and permit the claim to be reinstated and allowed.

Applicant has studied the additional references made of record by the Examiner and believes all the claims in the present patent application to be patentable over these references, whether taken individually or in any combination.

Applicant believes the amendments remarks presented hereinabove to be fully responsive to all of the grounds of rejection raised by the examiner. In view of these remarks, applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims in the present application are in order for allowance. Notice to this effect is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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